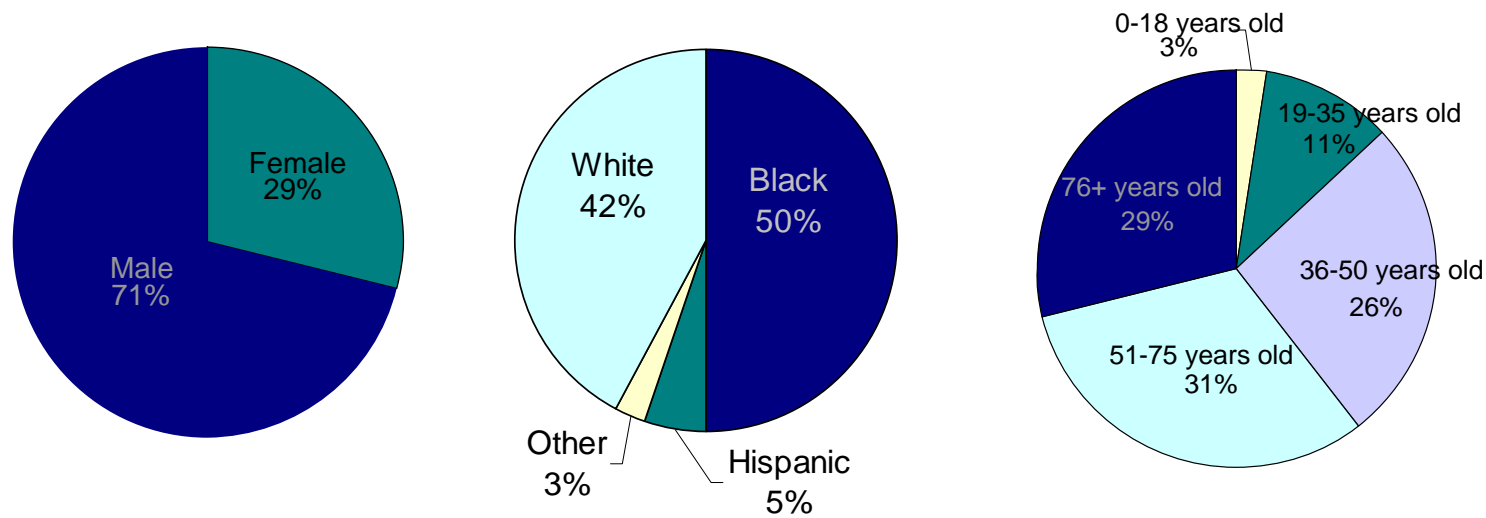


Carbon Monoxide Poisonings Due to Faulty Heaters & Generators

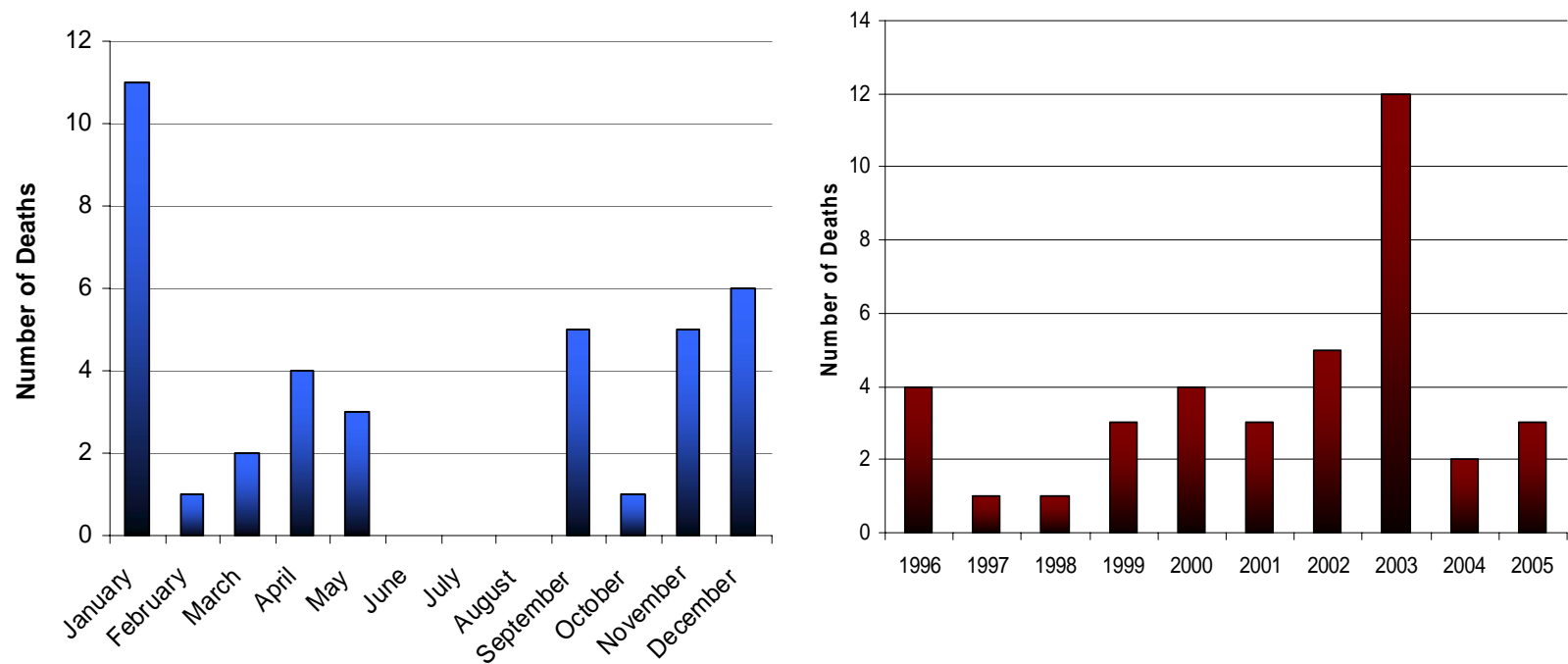
Faulty heaters and generators caused 38 carbon monoxide (CO) deaths in the Commonwealth of Virginia between 1996 and 2005 according to a review of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's database. These deaths exclude carbon monoxide deaths due to fire smoke inhalation regardless of the cause of the fire.

- 45% of these deaths occurred in January & December
- 85% of these deaths occurred in a home residence (home, apartment, trailer)
- The average age was 58 years old with a range of 12-94
- 37% of decedents had alcohol present in their system
- An average of 1-4 these deaths occurred per year
 - In 2003, 12 such deaths occurred
 - Several of these deaths were related to improper generator use during periods of power outages

Figures 1-3. Basic demographics of CO poisonings due to a faulty heater or generator, 1996-2005



Figures 4 & 5. Number of CO deaths due to faulty heater or generator by month (Fig. 4) & by year (Fig. 5), 1996-2005



Safety Tips

- Never use a generator indoors or in an attached garage
- Never leave a space heater on when you sleep or leave the area
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm

Additional Information

- Please visit the following websites for additional information
Virginia Department of Health information
 - <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/PressReleases/2006/071406CarbonMonoxideFAQs.asp>

Other sources of information

- <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp>
- <http://www.homesafe.com/coalert/cofacts.htm>
- <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/cofacts.html>